

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing purchase offers, comprising:
receiving, from a user, a purchase request including purchase profile information;
determining a set of purchase options based on the purchase profile information;
determining a point value for each purchase option based on characteristics associated with the respective purchase option; and
providing one or more purchase offers associated with respective purchase options based upon the point values for the purchase options and further based upon a marketing criterion of at least one of a supplier that provides the purchase option and a seller that provides the one or more purchase offers.
2. The method of Claim 1 wherein providing one or more purchase offers comprises limiting the purchase offers from a respective supplier based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.
3. The method of Claim 1 wherein providing one or more purchase offers comprises presenting the purchase offers to the user in accordance with the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
monitoring purchase transactions associated with a type of purchase option offered by a supplier; and
adjusting the provision of purchase offers for the type of purchase option offered by the supplier based on the monitoring.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein adjusting the provision of purchase offers includes:
adjusting a number of times the type of purchase option offered by the supplier is included in a document that presents the purchase offers based on the monitoring.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein adjusting the provision of purchase offers includes:
adjusting a location of a purchase offer associated with the type of purchase option offered by a supplier in a document that presents the purchase offers based on the monitoring.

7. The method of Claim 4, wherein adjusting the provision of purchase offers includes:

adjusting a format of a purchase offer associated with the type of purchase option offered by a supplier in a document that presents the purchase offers based on the monitoring.

8. The method of Claim 1 wherein determining a point value for each purchase option includes:

determining an initial point value for each purchase option; and
assessing penalty points for at least some purchase options based upon at least one of variations between the purchase profile information and the respective purchase option and availability of the respective purchase option.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein the purchase option is a flight option, and wherein determining a point value for each purchase option includes:

determining a point value for the flight option,
assessing penalty points to the point value based on at least one of:

i) a departure displacement time for the flight option compared to a requested departure time included in the purchase request,

ii) a connection service type associated with the flight option, and

iii) an inventory class status associated with the flight option.

10. The method of Claim 1 wherein the purchase request comprises a travel request including travel profile information, wherein the method further comprises:

identifying a plurality of candidate schedules based upon the travel request;

determining availability of the plurality of candidate schedules;

determining a price of at least those candidate schedules that are available, and

wherein the point value for each purchase option is determined for each of the candidate schedules that are available.

11. The method of Claim 1 further comprising constructing a plurality of data structures with each data structure containing no more than a predefined number of purchase options for a respective supplier, and wherein providing one or more purchase offers comprises providing one or more purchase offers from among the purchase options contained within the plurality of data structures.

12. An offer generating module for providing purchase offers comprising:

a processing element adapted to receive, from a user, a purchase request including purchase profile information, said processing element also adapted to determine a set of purchase options based on the purchase profile information, said processing element further adapted to determine a point value for each purchase option based on characteristics associated with the respective purchase option, and said processing element additionally adapted to provide one or more purchase offers associated with respective purchase options based upon the point values for the purchase options and further based upon a marketing criterion of at least one of a supplier that provides the purchase option and a seller that provides the one or more purchase offers.

13. The offer generating module of Claim 12 wherein said processing element is further capable of limiting the purchase offers from a respective supplier based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

14. The offer generating module of Claim 12 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers to the user in accordance with the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

15. The offer generating module of Claim 14 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers provided by a

respective supplier in a location relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

16. The offer generating module of Claim 14 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers provided by a respective supplier in a format relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

17. The offer generating module of Claim 12 wherein said processing element is further capable of monitoring purchase transactions and adjusting the provision of purchase offers based upon the purchase transactions.

18. The offer generating module of Claim 12 wherein said processor determines a point value for each purchase option by determining an initial point value for each purchase option, and by assessing penalty points for at least some purchase options based upon at least one of variations between the purchase profile information and the respective purchase option and availability of the respective purchase option.

19. The offer generating module of Claim 12 wherein said processing element is further capable of constructing a plurality of data structures with each data structure containing no more than a predefined number of purchase options

for a respective supplier, and wherein said processing element provides at least one purchase offer from among the purchase options contained within the plurality of data structures.

20. A method for providing purchase offers, comprising:

receiving, from a user, a purchase request including purchase profile information;

identifying a set of purchase options having respective scores based on their characteristics and the purchase request; and

providing at least one purchase offer based on the respective scores and associated marketing criteria;

wherein the manner in which the purchase options are identified, scored and provided is based upon at least one of the user, the purchase profile information and a supplier of the purchase offer.

21. The method of Claim 20 wherein providing at least one purchase offer comprises limiting the purchase offers from a respective supplier based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

22. The method of Claim 20 wherein providing at least one purchase offer comprises presenting the purchase offers to the user in accordance with the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

23. The method of Claim 22 wherein presenting the purchase offers comprises presenting the purchase offers provided by a respective supplier in a location relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

24. The method of Claim 22 wherein presenting the purchase offers comprises presenting the purchase offers provided by a respective supplier in a format relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

25. The method of Claim 20 further comprising monitoring purchase transactions and adjusting the provision of purchase offers based upon the purchase transactions.

26. The method of Claim 20 wherein identifying the set of purchase options having respective scores comprises determining a point value for each purchase option; and assessing penalty points for at least some purchase options based upon at least one of variations between the purchase profile information and the respective purchase option and availability of the respective purchase option.

27. The method of Claim 20 further comprising constructing a plurality of data structures with each data structure containing no more than a predefined number of purchase options for a respective supplier, and wherein providing at least one purchase offer comprises providing at least one purchase offer from among the purchase options contained within the plurality of data structures.

28. The method of Claim 20 wherein identifying a set of purchase options comprises selecting at least one database of purchase options based upon at least one of the user and the purchase profile information, and subsequently searching the selected database to identify the set of purchase options.

29. The method of Claim 20 wherein the purchase request comprises a travel request including travel profile information, wherein the method further comprises:

identifying a plurality of candidate schedules based upon the travel request;

determining availability of the plurality of candidate schedules;

determining a price of at least those candidate schedules that are available, and

wherein the scores for the set of purchase options are determined for each of the candidate schedules that are available.

30. An offer generating module for providing purchase offers comprising:

a processing element adapted to receive, from a user, a purchase request including purchase profile information, said processing element also adapted to identify a set of purchase options having respective scores based on their characteristics and the purchase request, and said processing element further adapted to provide at least one purchase offer based on the respective scores and associated marketing criteria, wherein the manner in which said processing element identifies and scores the purchase options and provides the purchase offer is based upon at least one of the user, the purchase profile information and a supplier of the purchase offer.

31. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is further capable of limiting the purchase offers from a respective supplier based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

32. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers to the user in accordance with the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

33. The offer generating module of Claim 32 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers provided by a respective supplier in a location relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

34. The offer generating module of Claim 32 wherein said processing element is further capable of presenting the purchase offers provided by a respective supplier in a format relative to the purchase offers provided by other suppliers that is based upon the marketing criteria of the supplier and the seller.

35. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is further capable of monitoring purchase transactions and adjusting the provision of purchase offers based upon the purchase transactions.

36. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is further capable of determining a point value for each purchase option; and assessing penalty points for at least some purchase options based upon at least one of variations between the purchase profile information and the respective purchase option and availability of the respective purchase option.

37. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is further capable of constructing a plurality of data structures with each

data structure containing no more than a predefined number of purchase options for a respective supplier, and wherein said processing element provides at least one purchase offer from among the purchase options contained within the plurality of data structures.

38. The offer generating module of Claim 30 wherein said processing element is capable of identifying the set of purchase options by selecting at least one database of purchase options based upon at least one of the user and the purchase profile information, and by subsequently searching the selected database to identify the set of purchase options.